

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING (FORMAL)
HELD AT 6:30PM, ON
WEDNESDAY, 18 JULY 2018
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors, Aitken, Bisby, (Chair), Bond, Harper, Hussain, Jones, Lane, Saltmarsh, Smith and Stokes.

Officers Present:

Nicola Curley, Assistant Director Children's Services
Myra O'Farrell, Head of Corporate Parenting
Andy Pallas, The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT)
Alice Prosser, Children in Care Officer
Jenny Weeden, Senior Youth Engagement and Participation Officer
Deborah Spencer, Dedicated nurse for Children in Care
Deborah Kennedy, Dedicated Nurse for Children in Care
Dr Mona Aslam, Designated Doctor for Looked After Children
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present:

Phillip Gilbert MBE - Foster Care Forum
Stephen Greene - Foster Care Forum

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ayres, Councillor Aitken was in attendance as substitute.

2. MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were made.

4. DRAFT REVIEW OF 2017/18 AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2018/19

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the Draft Review of 2017/18 and Work Programme for 2018/19.

The purpose of the report was to request the Committee to consider and comment on the review of work undertaken in 2017/18 and to approve the Work Programme items for 2018/19.

The Chairman introduced the report and highlighted the review of the Committee's work.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered and **RESOLVED** to note agree the report.

AGREED ACTION

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously) to note the report and:

- I. Considered the items presented to the Corporate Parenting Committee during 2017/18;
- II. Agreed that the meeting format adopted at its informal meeting on 5 October 2016 and ratified at its formal meeting on 9 November 2016, was a true reflection of the Committee's work commitment;
- III. Noted the current Committee's formal and informal meeting format;
- IV. Determined its priorities, and approved the draft work programme for formal and informal meetings for 2018/19; and
- V. Noted the Terms of Reference for this Committee as set out in Part 3, Delegations Section 2 – Regulatory Committee Functions, 2.4.

5. Corporate Parenting Champions Report

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the appointment of the Corporate Parenting Champion positions. Since the publication of the report, two vacancies had arisen for the position of Health Champion and Housing Champion.

The purpose of the report was to request the Committee to consider and appoint the positions of Corporate Parenting Champion, which included the recent vacant positions.

The following nominations for the vacant positions which were seconded, Councillor Stokes was appointed to the position of Housing Champion and Councillor Aitken was appointed to Health Champion.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered and **RESOLVED** to approve the Champion positions.

AGREED ACTION

The Committee **RESOLVED** (unanimously) to note the report and agreed the appointment of Corporate Parenting Champions as follows:

- I. Housing - Councillor Stokes
- II. Employment and Training Opportunities within the Council Departments and Partner Agencies - Councillor Ayres
- III. Health - Councillor Aitken
- IV. Education Attainment and access to higher education - Councillor Ayres
- V. Recreation and Leisure activities - Councillor Smith
- VI. Finance and benefits - Councillor Bond

6. Update from the Senior Participation Officer on behalf of the Children in Care Council

The Corporate Parenting Committee received an update in relation to the You Said We Did progress.

The purpose of the report was to request the Committee to consider and note the contents.

The Senior Participation Officer for Children in Care Council introduced the item to Members and asked them to note the update and raise any queries with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee discussed the update and the key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Ofsted had visited the Youth Club and talked to the children who were able to take the officers on a journey covering their last 12 months in care.
- The use of MOMO was continuing and being utilised in a positive way and a recent case was highlighted where the App had been used by a child in care to access the support needed and achieved a positive outcome.
- Whilst it was acknowledged that the Mind of My Own (MOMO) App was a useful tool not all children in care (CiC) were aware of its existence.
- Children in Care were introduced to the App via their Go To Cards all children had been given, however any gaps would be reviewed.
- Any carer or child who required access to the App could contact the safeguarding services.
- It was suggested that the Foster Carer Forum representatives could raise awareness of the availability of the Children in Care (CiC) Mind of My Own (MOMO) application at their meetings and request that Foster Carers encourage their CiC to use the function to manage their communications with the Local Authority.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered and **RESOLVED** (unanimously) to note the report.

7. UPDATE FROM FOSTER CARERS

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the recent activities and outcomes of the Foster Carer Forum meetings.

The purpose of the report was to request the Committee to consider and note the update provided by foster carers.

Philip Gilbert MBE introduced the report and provided an update of the discussions and actions arising from the Foster Carers Forum meetings.

The Corporate Parenting Committee discussed the update and the key points raised and responses to questions included:

- The recent Foster Carers Barbecue had been very successful and Members commented that such initiatives were viewed positively within the community;
- The Adolescents and Children's Trust (TACT) had introduced level four training for foster carers, to ensure the best care was being provided to support the most challenging children;
- TACT reported they were working on the 'staying put' plan;
- There was a shared house scheme, which foster carers were receiving training on with the aim to support young people in care with the transition towards independent living; and
- The legal tenancy issues of a shared housing scheme was being explored by TACT.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered and **RESOLVED** to note the report.

AGREED ACTION

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered and **RESOLVED** (unanimously) to note the report and agreed that:

1. The Foster Carer Forum representatives would highlight the availability of the Children in Care (CiC) Mind of My Own (MOMO) application with Foster Carers through the Forum meetings with the aim to encourage their CiC to use the function to manage communications with the Local Authority.

8. REPORT ON PROGRESS OF UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report on the progress with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC).

The purpose of the update was to request the Committee to consider the progress made with UASC placed in Peterborough.

The Assistant Director Children's Services introduced the item to Members and asked them to note the report and raise any queries with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee discussed the update and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- The reduction in numbers of UASC was due to five children reaching the age of 18.
- The report on Accommodation and Placement mentioned in item 4.8 of the report would be welcomed by the Corporate Parenting Panel in due course.
- The Red Cross had not been particularly successful in finding the families of these (UASC), mainly due to the scant knowledge the children had themselves and the difficulty of communications within their home country.
- School places were allocated on a catchment basis to place a child in the nearest school to their home.
- Asylum Seeking Children were provided with interpreters when being interviewed.
- Members commented that it was important that the voice of the UASC was heard and that this should be demonstrated in future reports.
- The Community Cohesion Officer had liaised with the local community to foster links with organisations that had relevant ethnic backgrounds to identify mosques and churches, which asylum seeking children could attend in order to connect with their culture and heritage.

The Committee considered and **RESOLVED** (unanimously) to note the report.

9. ANNUAL HEALTH REPORT FROM THE DESIGNATED NURSE FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

The Corporate Parenting Committee received an Annual Health report.

The purpose of the update was to request the Committee to consider, note the annual update which was presented to Members each July. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview of the CCGs activities to ensure robust monitoring and quality assurance systems were in place to meet the health needs of the Looked After Children population in Peterborough.

The Designated Nurse for Children in Care introduced the item to Members and asked them to note the report and raise any queries with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee discussed the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) questionnaire was used as a standard tool to measure emotional health for the young people and the carers which were carried out continually within set timeframes.
- CAMH had provided extra funding to close the gap for children with behavioural and attachment difficulties following a letter sent from the Committee.
- Some assessments were out of time where the child was placed out of county where the assessment had been conducted by other local authorities and the priority these were given had been variable.
- The Committee were advised that an audit on comparisons between in area and out of area health assessments was planned for the future.
- Health assessments carried out on Children in Care out of area by another county used standardised national paperwork. Once a completed health reports was submitted by another authority, the action plans were overseen by the local relevant doctor. An out of county health assessment would be conducted in due course.
- Enquiries were being made into developing a Leaving Care Application to move away from paper booklets and try to reach care leavers on a more relevant platform.
- The dental data within the performance report had gone into the green.
- Most health assessment improvements had been initiated as a result of the recent audit. The alignments of processes between Peterborough and Cambridge had improved documentation and added further questions to the health questionnaire, which had a positive impact on the results.
- The Committee were impressed with the significant improvements and expressed their thanks.
- The MOMO App was not linked to any other systems.
- Every MOMO statement would be read and passed onto the relevant social worker.
- The SDQs were sent out with the appointment letter for the initial health assessment or given out at the assessment and annually at a CiCs review.
- Two written letters were sent out to request completion of the SDQ and the Committee were advised that if the form was still not completed, a request would be made to fill them out on the day of the health check.
- For older children, both the carer and the child completed the same form and the results compared.
- Where assessments had been missed it would usually be due to a clash of appointments.
- If a child had missed two appointments, a telephone conversation would be conducted.
- The data for the two months gap for assessments was now available.
- Around 50% of questionnaires were returned.
- Work was underway to improve on the number of questionnaires being completed and returned.
- It was being considered how returned questionnaires with high SDQ scores could be shared with a child's teacher and this process was being researched at present.
- The Committee were advised that currently work was underway with social care, education and health to use the SDQ to formulate the CiC, care plan and share the information as a tool to provide a cohesive service for the child.
- Training would also be delivered to foster carers around getting the surveys completed and returned.
- Questions were raised regarding the timescales in place for psychological care however, there had been a break in that service and timelines would be reviewed. It had been anticipated that the recent funding would help to improve services for CiC with attachment issues.
- CAMHs had collected data from all children collectively however, CiC data could be separated out in the future.

- Many CiC had not met the specific criteria to qualify for CAMHs, although having attachment disorder difficulties or trauma related behaviour and there was a gap in services available through CAMHs. A recent briefing note had been sent to Members to update them on the position.
- TACT had individuals that could provide mental health support in placements where CiC had a higher need and there was a risk of placement breakdown.
- NSPCC were also able to provide therapists for CiC with behaviour and attachment disorders.

The Committee considered and **RESOLVED** (unanimously) to note the report.

10. PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to Children in Care and Care Leaver placements.

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an overview in respect of the numbers of children and young people currently being looked after by the Authority and to provide a breakdown of the types of placements in which they were living. The report also provided information about the age, gender and ethnicity of those children and young people.

The Assistant Director Children's Services introduced the report and requested Members to note the content of the report and raise any queries they had with lead officers.

- There were 380 children in care in May 2018.
- There were previously 392 children in care however, the number had been exceptionally high.
- The performance indicators highlighted within the report as red related to numbers of Children in Care rather than performance.
- The Council were working to reduce the number of CiC, however, the resources had remained the same to support these services.
- Audits have been conducted to ensure the correct children were being brought into care.
- The number of children in care per 10,000 is statistically lower than our neighbours.
- The placement stability was around a small group of children who had moved on a regular basis and there had been placed in the right placements.
- Areas of the report that were grey in colour had move towards quarterly reporting to improve accuracy.
- Dental checks were green.
- The 16+ worker in the virtual school had resulted in improvement.
- The Authority's performance statistics for placements were benchmarked against statistical neighbours to ensure the right children were being taken into care and there was no limit.
- The statistical figure for measurements were set by the DfE and could not be adjusted to what the Authority think the population had increased to. It was noted that the statistic had not always indicated red.
- The young person recorded with a disability was placed outside the city area as there were no suitable placements within. A disabled child with would receive the same reviews as other children in care.
- Children with disabilities were reported to be allocated an independent visitor where frequent family visits had not occurred to ensure they were always represented.

- Work was being undertaken with the courts to reduce the average number of days between court dates offered for adoption.
- The statistics do not include the children who are fostered by prospective adoptive parents who gone on to adopt that child.
- The performance report was not expected to spike for children that were missing when the weather had been warmer, however, it tended to be the same CiC reported as missing.
- Often CiC were not missing as such, their whereabouts were known and they had just failed to return home.
- The distinction between absent and missing children was different, however, there had been no option to change this within the placements performance reports due to legal requirements.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered and **RESOLVED** (unanimously) to note the report.

11. MEMBERS ISSUES

Members that were not part of the core Corporate Parenting Committee membership, but held corporate parenting responsibilities, were invited raise issues they had with regard to the services provided to Children in Care (CiC).

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered and **RESOLVED** that there were no issues to raise.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next informal meeting was due to be held on 12 September 2018. The formal meeting in November 2018 will be rescheduled.

Chairman
6:30pm – 7:55pm